



JIM DOYLE
GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

GOVERNOR'S HMONG RESETTLEMENT ADVISORY TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES

201 E. WASHINGTON AVE (GEF I), MADISON, ROOM D203

December 7, 2004 (10:00 AM to 12:45 PM)

Members Present: Kaying Xiong (Chair), Andrew Benedetto, Ann Wondergem, Bee Xiong, Bounning Her, ChaSong Yang, Cheryl McIlquham, Christa Xiong, John Medinger, Ker Vang, Mary Ann Jackson, Melissa Borth, Nell Anderson, Peter Yang, Phyllis Bermingham, Thai Vue, Yee Moua.

Others, including Guest Speakers: Savitri Tsering (DHFS), Karen Fink (U.S. DHHS), Susan Levy (DWD), Ying Lee (DWD), Charles Vue (UW-Eau Claire), Chris Vandall (WTCS), Todd Richmond (Associated Press), Dan Hayes, Wisconsin Jewish Conference, Rachel Allen, Governor Doyle's Office, Sophia Yeu VueLor, Catholic Charities/Diocese of La Crosse, Teresa, Scollon (DNR), Kou Xiong (DNR).

Members Not Present: Dan Idzikowski, Susan Gundlach, Sharon Hunter, Shoua Xiong, Shwaw Vang, Joe Vang, Hoyu Sayaovong, Jim Schramm, ThajYing Lee, Peter Yang, Yang Max Kue.

Welcome and Introductions - Kaying Xiong (Chair)

Kaying gave a welcome and thank you to members of the Task Force for taking the time to be at the meeting. She also thanked the speakers from DNR and other guests for their attendance and participation.

Kaying then asked Task Force members to revisit the October 17 Meeting Minutes for any additional thoughts, additions or corrections. The Minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

Members of the Task Force also reviewed the sample letters previously sent to a number of cabinet secretaries (Health and Family Services, Commerce, WHEDA, and the Wisconsin Technical College System). These are letters asking for their support of the recommendations from the Governor's Hmong Resettlement Task Force, which are pertaining to programs administered by their respective department, as they submit their biennial budget to the Governor.

Updates - Susan Levy, Chief, Immigrant Integration Section, BMRLS, DWD

As of December 6, 2004 there are 1,941 new Hmong refugees coming to the state. The original total estimated for Wisconsin was 3,190. So far no state has

more refugees than what they originally thought they were going to get. State Department recently indicated that they anticipated the resettlement to be extended through April of next year.

We have had experiences with secondary migration, either from Wisconsin or to Wisconsin. There is a need to talk to the anchor families to encourage the new families before they come to carefully choose their destination to minimize the patterns.

The Bureau of Migrant, Refugee and Labor Services (BMRLS) has issued guidelines to agencies to develop their plan for refugee services in 2005. Refugee services contracts generally operate on calendar year basis. The plans from agencies were due in BMRLS on November 30, 2004. Staff are currently reviewing agencies' plans for what services they will provide next year. Contracts are being mailed out to agencies as we speak.

Also the good news for Wisconsin is that our congressional delegation is quite successful in getting additional funding. The federal budget passed, although it hasn't been signed yet. In the budget, there are additional funding for both cash and medical assistance--funding which funds the health screenings, the refugee cash assistance and the refugee medical assistance for those refugees who are not on W-2 and Title 19. Another excellent news for us is that in the budget there is an additional 14 million in new social services funding for refugees. There is language in the conference report that targeted that 14 million at services for Hmong, Somali, and school impacted programs. The language also encourages the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to use its discretionary funding to support IDAs', elderly services, and community services employment. As we speak, ORR seems to be seeking input from refugee folks in terms of what should they target the discretionary funding for the coming year. ORR has not yet indicated what mechanism they will use to get the 14 million out. But we continue to think that our proposals that we submitted in October under the Unanticipated Arrivals grants are likely to be one avenue to get some of that money out. ORR might announce by Christmas time whether we got the money. The next application is due February 28 so there is a need to plan now as to what services to be included. Certainly, we will review the issues and recommendations identified by the Task Force to be incorporated into the new grant application, especially recommendations from the economic/employment subcommittee. There is also an opportunity for self help organizations—the mutual assistance associations---to get funding for organizational development and we encourage WUCMAA to take advantage of the opportunity to strengthen their operational capacity.

DNR – Response to the Sawyer County Tragedy – Teresa Scollon, Director, Office of Diversity Affairs, and Kou Xiong, Hmong Liaison

Teresa Scollon briefly shared what DNR has been trying to do in response to the Sawyer County shooting. First, the conservation wardens have worked with DNR staff and the Secretary to send a clear message out to the public that this is an act of an individual and is not a reflection of the entire Hmong community.

The other message is that the cultural issue is a two way street. As Hmong hunters coming to the country or someone coming from a different state like Minnesota need to know what the hunting rules and regulations in Wisconsin are. It is also true that a long time resident of Wisconsin needs to expect that they may run into someone who doesn't share their language or their background.

This is an unavoidable discussion. Since the cultural issue has come out to the surface this would be a good opportunity to address the issue and make it as a part of the public dialogue in a positive way. We are hearing from a lot of people who have come forward in good will that they are happy to help in whatever they can to defuse the racial tension; they want to be a part of the solutions.

There is a need to send a clear a message that addressing cultural issue is not focussing on anyone cultural group. Everyone has the rights and responsibilities and the opportunity to go out and enjoy the outdoors. Everyone has the rights to feel safe in the woods. These messages will be incorporated into the existing ones and will be asking conservation and other groups to help disseminate the messages.

The next step will be to evaluate and improve the Hmong outreach efforts. DNR will work with the Hmong communities, conservation groups, law enforcement, the UW-Extensions to further address the issues and hopefully to prevent similar incident from happening.

Kou Xiong shared what he has done for the Hmong communities as a staff liaison with DNR. Kou has been with DNR for ten years. Many workshops on hunting regulations and safety, including fishing have been conducted for Hmong throughout the state. However, it should be noted that at the first two day of the hunting opening season, there were ¾ million hunters out there in the woods, including 14,000 Hmong. This is a huge number and only one bilingual staff person can't do the job alone. His future plan is to do more education for both Hmong and non-Hmong hunters. Hmong culture will need to be shared with non-Hmong hunters as well. He will certainly need help from Hmong mutual assistance associations in the endeavor.

After the presentations from the DNR staff, several Task Force members expressed that there is a need to do more education on hunting regulations for the Hmong communities. More bilingual staff is also needed to effectively address the issues. Other ways to defuse the tension were also brainstormed by encouraging Hmong hunters to join other hunter clubs, for example.

Task Force Sub-Committee Meetings and Reports

Each sub-committee met briefly to review and finalize their respective report to be incorporated into the masterpiece.

Task Force members also discussed the future of the group. It was concluded that the group meets with Governor Doyle on January 6, 2005 to present its report and solicit his input for this.

To complete the Task Force Report for the January 6 meeting, the group has proposed the following timeline:

December 10---All final subcommittee reports are due to Ying Lee at DWD.

December 15---A draft of the whole report will be sent to all Task Force members to read and make comments.

December 21 at 10:00 AM---Task Force members meet via a conference call to provide comments or feedback on the final report.

January 6, 2005---Have a final formal meeting with the Governor. Every member is to make every effort to attend.

Meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.